

Life And Times Of Little Jimmy
& The Homewreckers

Blood Clot

"You no man, you a blood clot!" This is what the Rastafarians used to say to me,

when I worked with a dozen young Jamaicans at the seafood company in South Boston. They would laugh. They thought I was the establishment man. I would

overhear them talking to one another and the dialect was so bizarre, it was impossible to understand. Yet when they spoke to anyone else, you could understand perfectly well. It was a secret society.

Well, I promoted two brothers, Norris and Vincent Jackson, to work with me in Quality Control. That broke the ice. Norris was older and a real Rastaman, not afraid of working in Southie at all, strong and proud. Vincent was mild-mannered to a fault. It took a while, but several favors later, Norris realized I was to be trusted. They would talk to each other in front of me and challenge me to interpret what was said. It was hilarious. I found out blood clot was the worst thing you could call someone in Jamaica.

I had played on the radio at Emerson College several times and was invited to play a Blues/Reggae festival at the Hatch Shell on the Charles River. Two Reggae bands, Zion Initiation and Loose Caboose (the hottest Reggae bands in Boston at that time) and two Blues bands, Little Jimmy and The Homewreckers,

and Paul Richelle. We would swap sets. Homewreckers, Zion, Richelle, Loose Caboose. It was one of my favorite gigs. The Rastafarians arrived and pulled what looked like a Christmas tree out of a van. Scissors came out and the party began. Giant, and I mean giant, spliffs were twisted up. I got the Jackson brothers backstage and they introduced me to everyone. We smoked so much

before I took stage, that I would forget what song I was playing halfway through. I just sang any lyrics I knew that went along with the groove. It's something I do

until this day. From that day on, I was accepted unequivocally by the Boston Rastafarian community. I was invited to special parties in the South End, where

the chalice (the ceremonial rams-horn pipe) never went out, and traditional holiday Jamaican meals were served.

Norris Jackson was a jokster. He brought me a dish that he claimed his Grandmother had prepared. Only made once a year. He and Vincent grinned as I took the first bite. It was great, hot as a motherfucker, but great. Vincent couldn't contain himself. "It's ram's cock!" It was made by his Grandmother, after all, especially for me.

I had pushed hard to get them ahead at work. They took over the department and did a wonderful job. Norris was killed in a South End shooting. Vincent married a Portugese co-worker and moved back to Jamaica with the money they had saved. It's a time in my life I will always treasure. And to think, I started out as a blood clot.

The Gin Mill

I had a friend, Maynard Silva, who was a great Blues guitarist. He called and said he could get me a gig in his home town. "They'll dig you man. Love the Blues. You'll blow the roof off the joint!". It was called The Gin Mill in Marlborough, Massachusetts.

The club was the first roadhouse I had ever worked. Chicken wire in front of the bandstand, condom machines in the restrooms (shocking back then) and a barmaid with lots of tatoos and very few teeth. There was an attached motel.

We unloaded the van through the back. My bass player ordered a peppermint schnapps when we walked in. The barmaid held up a bottle with about an inch

of booze left in it. She slugged it down, threw the bottle over her head, through

an open door in back of the bar and said, "I'll crack you guys open a fresh one".

Some little guy at the bar got up to get smokes out of a machine. Lost his money.

He started smashing the machine against the wall, until cigarettes flew out of the

bottom. Tossed them around to the patrons and sat back down at the bar. I asked the barmaid if he was trouble. She said "No, he's the fuckin' owner!".

His son looked like a refrigerator with a head. A big mass of curly hair and a black overcoat that made him look even more impressive. As he passed, he was wringing his hands and saying, "No problem". The crowd was already cocked. Plaid flannel shirts, jeans and Buck knives, hooker clothes and big hair. Junior gave the band the lowdown. "No matter what happens, keep playin'".

The first set went off without a hitch. Every song, a fight would break out. The Fridge would walk past the bandstand and say, "No problem". He'd grab two guys by the scruff of their necks and toss them down several steps, through the swinging doors, into the parking lot. This went on until our last set. Then the motorcycle gang showed up. The Fridge walked past, wringing his hands and said, "Now, we have a problem". Some girl was screaming, "You iced my brother, you motherfuckers!". It was about to start.

I had scoped the place out earlier. Bars in the windows, the back entrance cluttered with shit. No way out!. I told the band, "Protect the equipment!". We picked up mike stands as weapons. The Flannel boys formed a line in front of the bar, everyone had had their Buck knives out. It was a Mexican stand-off. The owner pushed his way to the center. "I told you motherfuckers never to come in here!" He got in the gang leaders face and started pushing him backwards. The Flannel boys backed him up, forcing the gang back down the stairs. It was over. We played two more shakey songs and Junior gave us the nod.

Every tire in the parking lot was slashed. We were parked out back and were spared. Then we smelled the smoke. The place was on fire! We hustled everything out into the alley and loaded up as the Gin Mill burned. The Homewreckers became celebrities. The last band to play the Gin Mill. We got more private partys in Marlborough than you could imagine. I talked to Junior at the fire trucks. He wrang his hands and said, "You guys were great, no problem".

Revere Beach

The Homewreckers had an agent from the North End, Vinny. He looked and talked like a young Robert Dinero. He booked us the worse possible gigs you could imagine. A Chinese wedding for a well-to-do family from Cambridge. A wedding for for a Peruvian family. A Bar Mitzva for some kid from Brookline. Not gigs for a Blues band. But the worst was a gig in Revere.

I had always been told don't play Revere, it's going to be nothing but trouble.

The whole beach is run by the mob. Vinny assured us the gig was cool. A club on the beach that booked 50's bands. I told Vinny that we didn't do 50's material.

He had seen us play, and said, you guys do Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard, Chuck Berry, what's not to like. We reluctantly took the gig.

A co-worker, who was from Revere, said, "What are you crazy, that's the biggest gay bar on the strip". The stage was set. When we pulled in back

to unload, I saw "Little Jimmy" spray painted on the dumpster. The guys laughed. I knew it was an omen.

It was ladies night at the club. Half the women were gorgeous, well dressed, and looks to kill. The other half were crew-cut, leathered, tatooed and looking to kill the other half. There was a no-man's land in between (no pun intended).

We took the stage. Halfway through the set, the bartender appeared and said,

"Whose the leader of this shit outfit? Louie (the owner) ain't too happy."

I turned around, and the whole band had taken three steps back and turned around, like nothing was going on. I was on my own. "I'm the guy", I said, and followed the bartender to the back-room.

Louie sat behind a big cluttered desk. A three piece suit. A big cigar in his mit.

He had more hair on his knuckles than I had on my head. Then he asked me one of those questions that has no answer. "Why you tryin' to fuck me?"

My knees were knocking. I started rapping like a speed freak. " Louie, it was Vinny". I told him, "We weren't right for the gig from the start". As I went to make my next point, he held up his hand. "So I guess my problem is with Vinny. You'se guys are off the hook. See the bartender for your pay, then get the fuck outta my club". We got paid for the night and never heard from Vinny again.

Bob Johnson

Bob was known as the "Kansas City Kitty". An octogenarian bluesman. Years of experience. Played drums for Basie. Lost his gigs because he drank too much. He wound up in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, because he was illiterate. Got on a bus thinking he was going to Memphis, but ended up in Portsmouth instead.

I met Bob at Magic Sam's in Lawrence. Sam's was a place where all the local musicians hung out. My bass player had told me about Bob, and brought him by for one of our practice sessions. Bob was incredible. A harmonica virtuoso, played the guitar like John Lee Hooker, and the drums like Gene Krupa. A monster.
A sweetheart.

We had a standing friday night gig, with Bob at The Ox Cart, in Portsmouth. A bar that catered to the sailors. The only club in New Hampshire that had topless waitresses. Every friday we would go on under a different name. Bobby and The Curb Feelers, Bob's Big House Band, The Kansas City

Kitty Kats, Bobby's Drivin' Sideways, we even played as Bobby and The Homewreckers. Man, it was a trip.

Bob was an old time Bluesman. He hot-rodged his stage wear like I've only seen in New Orleans. Sequins all over his shirt, stuff pasted to his shoes. He taught me how to work a crowd. He would say, "Jump in and grab the ugliest/fattest chick in the room and dance with her like she was the living end". Where do you get direction like that? The cat was unbelievable. But his schtick always worked. A master.

Bob went into a nursing home. He would get out for gigs. His doctor said he should only drink one glass of wine a night, so Bob bought a huge glass that he would bring along to gigs. Doctors orders. Many a night I would bring him home after a gig. Carry him on my back, upstairs to his apartment and toss him into bed. The amazing thing was, he had Polaroid pictures, tacked all over his bed, of naked women, beautiful women, photos taken in that apartment. The Kansas City Kitty.

Speakeasy Pete's

We had played The Speakeasy in Cambridge, Massachusetts for years. The Thursday night band. Peter sold the club and started a joint in Lowell. It was a biker bar. The Lowell chapter of The Hell's Angels called it home. Never any trouble. Just one night, when the University of Lowell football team was there celebrating a big win. Bikers versus steroid freaks. A sight to behold.

Peter would sit at the bar, with a different beautiful woman on his arm everynight. I asked Peter, "What is it you have?" He said, "Money!" He introduced me to a woman, who, he said was the local madam working out of the Worthen Hotel. She looked like Raquel Welsh. Fiftyish. A knockout. She just loved Little Jimmy. I was dragged into the ladies room, to powder my nose. She said, "The fifty dollar numb you and gum you routine, the biker chicks offered, was no where. I should come by the Worthen after the gig." I said, "No Thanks". Well, when I got there, the place was jumping. Horny businessmen and a buffet. A dozen Victoria's Secret models lounging around. The madam, who told me her real name was Beatrice, asked, "Do you see anything you like?" I said "Yeah, you." I made a friend for life. We went out together a number of times. She would always

insist
on picking up the tab. Sometimes, I felt like a piece of meat. Yeah, right. Ha.

Zurich

When I first traveled to Zurich, I was excited about checking out the music scene.

I knew that Montreaux had always booked international Blues acts and figured there must be some Blues going on in Zurich. In my carry-on, I brought my harmonica case with about twenty harmonicas and was hoping to find a Blues

jam to sit in on. I was having little luck, until I found a record store named "Nina's Blues and Jazz". Nina was a sweetheart, very attractive and very knowledgeable. She explained that Blues wasn't really that hot in Zurich.

"Only cover bands doing a little Stevie Ray Vaughn and ZZ Top material. " Once in a while, an internal act would blow through, playing the bigger venues, but nothing on the club level.

My harmonicas sat in my hotel room, until weeks later, when I was to fly home.

Everything went well, until I passed my carry-on bag through the security screening. Bells and whistles went off. Instantly, I was surrounded by the Swiss army, machine guns in hand. I was instructed to open my carry-on and remove the harmonica case. It was laid on a table and I was told to open it very slowly. When the soldiers saw what was inside, they started laughing. "Harmonicas!" One soldier, who was obviously in charge, held up his hand. The laughing stopped. He glared at me and asked, "Why so many?" I explained they were all different keys and tunings. He asked again, "Why so many?" Was I thought to be a harmonica smuggler? He then asked, "Do you play these, all of these?" I said, "yes." He said, "So play!" I took out a chromatic and could only think of the song Curly of the Three Stooges played, when he was trapped inside of a radio and played a harmonica pretending to be a radio show. Why that song popped into my head, I'll never know. I played a little and the soldier held up his hand for me to stop. He had this huge smile. "I love country and western!" (What?) He asked where I was from. I said, "Boston". He said, "I love Cape Cod!" (What?) The big line of passengers behind us started clapping and laughing. I was free to go.

I've always heard of a captive audience, never a captive performer.

Haitian Voodoo

There was a big influx of Haitians into Boston. They were one step out of the

jungle.

We hired one at the seafood company and the next day it seemed like a hundred relatives showed up looking for work. The work was cold and wet. They were given old leaky rubber boots to wear on the production floor. Everyone had plastic bags lining the boots to keep their feet dry. The hardest working group of people I have ever seen. In the worst of conditions. Their belief in the supernatural amazed me.

The supervisors were Portugese from the Azores, who were one step up the ladder from the lowly Haitians. Very little understanding and respect for each other. One day everything came to a head. A Portugese machine operator was screaming at this Haitian woman for something or other. She was easily four hundred pounds and he was your typical slight, five foot tall, Portugese male.

He was slowly being backed into a corner by this woman. Both shouting in languages neither understood. He was trying to keep her at bay with a screwdriver, but she just kept on coming. Finally, when she was close enough, he hauled off and punched her square in the nose.

Everyone stopped what they were doing to watch the spectacle. She reeled backwards and fell to the floor. Her eyes rolled back in her head. Then suddenly

she was on her feet, leaping high in the air and landing flat on her back on the cement floor. It sounded like a side of beef thrown off the back of a truck. Again

and again she leaped, screeching the whole time. She started spinning on her side. Then it stopped. She lay motionless on her back, with only the whites of her eyes showing. The Haitian crew started screaming "voodoo!". Nobody knew what to do. Somebody called an ambulance.

The EMT's tried to revive her to no avail. They tried to pick her up. Four hundred pounds of dead weight wasn't going anywhere. The cops showed up and with

the EMT's, they still couldn't budge her. "Voodoo, voodoo" the Haitians were yelling. When the four men struggled to lift her, her uniform slipped up over her head revealing furry breasts and chest. The crew started howling. Frustrated, the cops call the stationhouse and in minutes, the biggest cop I've ever seen shows up. He's a white haired Irish cop. The Seargent. He yells for everybody to stand back, leaps on top of her and starts slapping the shit out of her. The whole time he's yelling "Your going to jail!". Surprisingly, she

comes to and is led off to the awaiting police car.
Just another day at Brilliant Seafood Company.

The Mad House

My first stay at a mental institution was a twenty-one day self-commitment. Everything had spiraled out of control. Mania, depression, substance abuse, failed suicide attempts. Life, as it was for me, was black, bleak, unbearable. You can not imagine what it takes to bring you to the point where ending your own life makes total sense. My first attempt at suicide was almost comical.

I checked into a nice hotel. My suitcase held nothing but pills and booze. I made one fatal mistake (no pun intended), that you learn about on your very first trip to a psych ward. Don't forget to hang the "do-not-disturb" tag on your door. I think I drank and drugged for several days. When I would come to and see a glow peeking around the heavy curtains, I wouldn't know if the sun was coming up or going down. Plan A was your basic hanging thing, but there was absolutely nothing to hang from in the entire room. I learned in the psych ward this isn't so. The shower curtain rod came down off the wall. The cheap plastic shower head pulled right off the pipe. I decided to go back to drinkin' and druggin'.

I hear shouting and someone is pulling on my leg. It's the maintenance guy and the maid. She had come in to clean the room and make the bed. I must have sent her away on the previous days. She saw feet sticking out from under the bed and thought it was a dead man. How I managed to wedge myself in this little six-inch space, I'll never know. The maintenance guy was perfectly livid. The maid kept looking around and swearing in Spanish. The room was trashed. I told them I had an adverse reaction to my medication. The maintenance guy said, "Fuck you! I'm calling the cops!" It was time to leave and for Plan B. I pushed all the furniture in front of the door, grabbed my stuff, and jumped off of the second story balcony into the bushes.

Plan B was your basic hose from the exhaust pipe in through the back window of the car. I had planned for a quick exit (no pun intended). My car was

parked
in the employee section by the dumpsters out back. They would probably
look
there last. A shop-vac hose and duct-tape were on the front seat. It took me
thirty seconds to hook-up and get the motor running. Minutes went
by...nothing.
I saw the police and fire department vehicles leave. I thought I was golden.
Maybe,
I had to race the engine. Minutes went by...nothing. Then there was a tap on
the
glass. It was a hotel security guard, who obviously hadn't been trained for a
close
encounter of the third kind. I could see the panic in his eyes. I said, "Please
step
away from the vehicle. I've got someplace important to go". He got on the
horn
for back-up. I blasted out of the parking lot, headed for the adjacent highway.
Down Interstate 93 with the morning commuters. The only car with the
exhaust
running into the back window.

I drove to the hospital, but still parked out back by the dumpsters, just in
case.
Instead of the emergency room, I went to the chapel. Some lady who was
praying
said, "Holy shit!" as she ran past. Through my tears, I saw the cops and the
orderlies putting on bright blue latex gloves (never a good sign). The next
thing
I remember was the long ride to The Mad House.

The Mad House (PartTwo)

The ambulance ride took forever. Somber EMT's sat
unresponsive.
I tried to talk my way out of the four-point restraints. "I think I'm having a
heart-attack". Nothing. "I think I'm going to be sick". Nothing. "I have to go to
the bathroom". They said, "We'll be there in a few minutes". Hell on wheels.
Nothing was said to me during intake. They heard that I was a runner and
had
escaped from the locked wards at the local hospital before. I was watched
like
a hawk.

The Psychiatric Hospital was old, dark, much like the infamous Danvers
State

Mental Hospital documented in the movie "Titicut Follies". One of my, and Jim Morrison's, favorite films. The staff had big smiles and winning personalities, only they left them at home. I was asked if I would rather be in the psych ward or the dual-diversity ward (mental / substance abuse combo). "I'm mental as anything!", I declared. Ten minutes in the psych ward changed my mind. It was like being thrown into a scene from "Dawn of the Living Dead". Over-medicated zombies with holes for eyes. "Could I please be put in with the druggies?", I asked.

Terror turned to pleasure. The dope fiends were a likable bunch, using their court ordered stay to make some new solid drug connections. They talked like pharmacology majors. Drug interactions, new stuff on the market, the best highs from common household ingredients. It was my college days all over again. Acting tough and acting out were expected, by the patients and the staff. If you didn't get thrown into the "Quiet Room" every now and then, you were ostracized and had to spend the best part of the day (meal-time) alone. There was one guy who was different from all the rest.

Seighin was from South Boston. An illegal Irish emigrant. Huge and brooding. Everyone was afraid of him. The orderlies went out of their way to avoid him. He lumbered about slowly. Never made eye contact with anyone.. Never was asked to come to groups. Never was asked anything by anybody. He had long unwashed hair and a hideous scar that ran from the top of his forehead, across one eye, bisecting his lips, to the tip of his chin. A relatively new scar, pink and jagged. When we would pass in the hall, I would greet him with the only Gaelic I could remember from my Irish Grandmother. It meant "One hundred thousand welcomes". He never acknowledged my presence. Until that one day.

I was sitting in the reading room with a book in my lap. Seighin came and stood before me. I gave him the daily greeting. He looked deeply into my eyes (the first time) and managed a weak smile. "What'cha readin'?", he said in a thick Irish

brogue. I said, "Some funny stories by Charles Bukowski". He said, "Read me a real funny one, I could use a laugh". I read him a story about a guys blanket that

came to life and tried to kill him. He laughed out loud from beginning to end. The

staff stood in awe at the door.. He hadn't spoken a word or made a sound his entire stay. We talked in muffled tones for an hour or more, exchanging our stories about how we wound up in The Mad House. He talked about the scar. A fight in a Southie bar over an Irish girls honor. He didn't really know her, she

was just a girl from the neighborhood. The bartender had slashed his beautiful face with a broken beer bottle.

I was being discharged, as was Seighin. He was excited about getting home. Plans to go back to Ireland. "But first, I'm going to Southie and kill the guy that cut me". He did.

Chicago Headcuttin'

I had known Jerry Portnoy for several years. A white boy from Chicago, who had played harmonica in The Muddy Waters Band. After Muddy's death Portnoy

fronted his own band, based out of Worcester, Massachusetts. Opening for him at several East Coast nightspots, we became friends. He was going through a messy divorce and was looking for someone to tell his troubles to. I was that someone. We would sit together between sets and he would cry in his beer.

I would critique his harmonica sound. "You gotta boost the bottom and chop the highs, man". Stuff like that. He would compliment me on my playing, especially the chromatic harmonica. I never heard him play chromatic. We got along as well as two harmonica playing frontmen could be expected. Something happened.

He had come home from doing The Albert Hall gigs with Eric Clapton and The Muddy Waters All-Star Band. There was a Blues concert in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, that he was headlining as part of The All-Stars. He ignored me and acted as if we had never met, even asking who I was. I couldn't figure out what was going on. After their set, there was to be a harmonica showdown. Doc

Johnson, another harmonica playing frontman, approached me and said I should be included. He said, "Jerry says it's alright". I was there covering the concert for The Boston Blues Society newsletter and of course I had a harmonica in my pocket.

The showdown was to feature Doc, myself and Jerry. We would solo in that order.

Doc played better than I had ever heard him play before. Then my turn.

Backed up

by The Muddy Waters All-Star Band was all the inspiration I needed to tear it up. I

hadn't played in two years and blew a solo that was over the top. Flawless.

Jerry

leaned into me at the end of my solo and said, "You're nowhere, man!" As he stepped forward to play, I stomped on his microphone cord, snapping it off from the amplifier. He turned around and glared at me. I said, "Now YOUR nowhere, Man", and walked off the stage. Chicago Headcuttin'.

J Geils

Saw the J Geils Blues Band at the Catacombs Club in Cambridge, Massachusetts

in 1968. I was going to Northern Essex Community College (No Sex CC) at the

time and was on the Student Activity Committee, that was responsible for putting

on mixers (dances), etc. I was sure J Geils would tear the place up. A real party band. So I booked them for the next mixer (\$300). The other act on the bill was The Beacon Street Union. J Geils insisted on going on first, which at the time, I didn't understand. They were undoubtedly the better of the two bands.

The night of the show, I was supposed to interview the band and take pictures for

the school paper. I found them in a classroom, where they were pretending to have

a college lecture. Peter Wolf was at the lectern and the rest of the band and their

entourage were seated about the room like students. They started goofing on me

the second I walked in. Wolf was shouting, "Do I spy a jug of wine in my classroom?"

"The 'students' passed the wine from hand to hand behind their backs. 'No, Professor Wolf!'"

The "interview" yielded absolutely nothing I thought I could use for the paper, at that time. It was all nonsense and belly laughs. Peter, as the Professor, was a riot! Rapping like a madman.

This happened to be the first gig that Peter did with The J Geils Blues Band. He was the show stopper. Hiding backstage for the first three songs, he was introduced with a James Brown type intro. He took a running start off-stage, and slid across to center stage on his knees. A showman! I took pictures of the whole thing. Years later, I sent the photographs to Peter. He couldn't believe his first gig with the band was captured on film. We became friends. To this day, he sends me all of his new releases, with a nice note.

Lenny Zane

Lenny and I were good friends, He was as funny and crazy and as unique' as the day is long. His music could drive people nuts, it could drive people crazy and it bordered at times at brilliance. I've seen him perform some cajun songs, like "Crab Boil", that were straight ahead creole rock & roll and others, that had the crowd covering their ears. You just had to love his hutspace. I heard he left the stage after a set and dropped dead in The Clubhouses bathroom. A fitting end to a unique club performer. I'll always love him and what he could put down.

Woodstock

The summer of Woodstock, was dry. No pot to be found, before the big festival. So, I went into Boston and bought a hundred grams of hash and keef, for the trip. We went out, with a couple of really square chicks, who were in for the ride of their life. The trip was uneventful. When we got to Bethel, that friday, the roads to the site were gridlocked, so we parked and started walking, carrying a ton of shit. We walked and walked. Up and over the rolling hills of upperstate New York, passing familys with their groceries, that happened to get stuck in the mess. It rained

and
we walked. Up and over endless hills. We were supposed to meet up with all
the
Mingya Valley people at the main gait, but there was no main gait. The
festival had
fallen apart at that point and everything was wide open. I was entrusted
with
watching out for my little sister, Martha, but we lost her along the way. We
got to
the fairgrounds late friday afternoon, after walking for eight hours.

The scene was beyond everything we could have imagined. The Aquarian
Age.
I sat up my tent a hundred yards from stage center. The rain had stopped.
Groovy!
A sea of Hippies. The music was non-stop. It went on twenty-four hours. You
would
fall asleep and wake up to the Jefferson Airplane. Groovy! The best band of
the
whole weekend, Creedence Clearwater Revival, in my opinion. The hash was
currency. People always talk about how hard it was to find good food, or even
water, but when you have a pocket full'o'hash, doors open up for you. We
dined
liked kings. I kept the whole crowd, around my tent stoned immaculate. We
walked out, leaving most of our shit behind, while Hendrix played.

Everybody was sitting on cars, creeping away from the weekend. We hopped
on
a car, to ride out. When they got to the hot-top, there was no traffic.
So, these fuckin'
stoners started driving like fifty miles an hour, with us, sitting on the trunk,
screaming and clutching on to the chrome trim. They had the eight-track
blasting and were oblivious to our plight. The State Troopers pulled over the
car. When we stepped off, there was Martha, sitting on the curb. What were
the chances? We got stoned and ate balogney and hitched a ride. Well, we
tried to hitch a ride. Everyone that would even stop and offer a ride to a
scruffy bunch of mud-soaked freaks, should be omended. I going to the Quick
Way This is what our first few hopefulls said. We didn't know what they
meant. It turned out, they were saying, the quick way out of New York. We
caught a ride, with an older guy, in a sports car, that took us all the way to
Boston. The busride, from Boston to Lawrence, was great. We were mud-
covered celebraties, telling the great tale of the Woodstock Aquarian
Exposition.

Von's Market

Got fired, this morning from my grocery baggin', shoppin' cart shaggin' job.
All
because of a joke.

Was hired eight months ago and humped like a fuckin' mule, to show everyone,
I could outwork the crew of slackers. I was the funny "Old Guy", baggin' your shit,
that you felt sorry for. Well' I tell a joke, to two fiftyish female employees and it went
like this: (Tim, talking to Joan and Shiela), "I haven't been with a woman , so long,
that I wouldn't know what to do with one, if I caught one. Thankfully, out of the
goodness of her heart, Joan has offered to give me a refresher course." Two sexual harrassment complaints. Gone, Baby, Gone.

The funny thing is, that Joan and I always joked around. Some sexual inuendo,
but that's it. In front of Shiela, who was obviously upset, at the joke, it went down
the toilet. Just like a comedy writer, to get fired for crackin' a joke. HA!

Vic's Place

When I was 15 or 16, (wait, i hate using digits). When I was fifteen or sixteen, I helped fry fish every Friday afternoon, after school at Vic's Place, in South Lawrence. What my Mama didn't know, at least what I thought, was that Vic's Place was a strip club and Friday afternoons, were prime time. The Lucchesi family lived across the street, in our new nice neighborhood. Lanker (Peter) was my best friend. His Dad was Vic. You would never believe how many times I got burnt (that's Lawrence for burned), as a fry cook We could see the stage from the kitchen. Oh, man. Then, Lanker's mom gets cancer, so every stripper has to come through the kitchen, to tell Lanker, how sorry they are. Sixteen years old,
with a star like Pussy Galor or something, right next to you (naked) while your
frying fish. OSHA would have some different rules, if I had my way.

Arthur Holtzman

I learned so much, from Arthur's dad. He was brilliant (a renowned electronic engineer), but was mental, like in "A Beautiful Mind". The family would be

trying

to carry on a conversation, around the kitchen table. All the while, Arthur's dad

would be lecturing. I would hang on every word, that the family ignored. Talk of t

ests, by the government, on mind control, for example. He knew his shit and was an insider. He made Arthur and his wife go to the cellar and put on the lead hats he invented. This will stop the brain wave modification. He was a holocaust and Bergen-Belson survivor. He would ask the question, "What is the most important thing, on this planet?" He would run out of the room. A

half-hour later, he would burst in and scream, "Water! Water is the most important thing on this planet!" I saw a story, many years later, about the Russians bombarding the US embassy with some sort of waves. The news said microwaves, but I don't know. Arthur's dad said, "When the truth comes out, the government will call it microwaves. Don't be fooled."

Primordial Ooze

We all, or most of us, believe that we evolved from the creatures that crawled

out of that primordial ooze. The crackers tried to tell us different. Even taking it

to court, in the Scope's trials. The flagella (tail) of the human sperm is almost identical to the flagella of any nauplius larvae (ocean creatures' motile sperm-like

ejaculate) in the ocean. A nine plus two structure of strands within the flagella.

The human sperm has an extra nine strands surrounding the inner eleven.

The

outer strands were chitinous (like a shell) and offered protection for the inner drivers. Other than that, our flagella is identical. Amniotic fluid is basically s

eaewater. Native cultures didn't have electron microscropy, but they knew just the same. We all are carbon based and we're lucky to be on a planet

with water. There's something about the water molecule that is unique. It's the

one hundred and five degree seperation between the oxygen molecules on the

hydrogen. It allows water to have amazing possibilities. Freeze and thaw, the coefficient of expansion upon freezing. Real unique stuff. We should consider ourselves lucky and should never look down on some slime mold and think we're better or superior. It would be like looking down on your brother or sister.

Vap's Party

We played probably 75% of all my gigs, over the years, in biker bars. They

were
the only joints that would always hire Blues bands during lean times, when
every
hole wanted Rock & Roll. We were the house band at Speakeasy Pete's
Downtown
Lounge in Lowell, MA. A popular hang out for the Lowell chapter of the Hell's
Angels. They put on a big summer party every year and we played a lot of
them.
It was at a huge horse farm in Pepperel, MA., that was owned by the head of
the
chapter.

The last gig we did for them was memorable. A family affair. All their kids
and
parents were in attendance, as well as, a rival gang that showed up with
their
familys, too. It was cool, until all the little ones and the parents split. Vap told
me
he accidentally knocked this rival dude over a post and rail fence. The
trouble
started. Vap was stabbed three times. A huge stand-off, with the Angels
having
the upper hand. The two factions faced off with a "no-man's-land" in
between
them. This little dude walks forward from the Angels and makes the
challenge.
"Anybody want to fuck with us now?" Some chick steps forward and starts
screaming that it was a set-up. The little dude knocks her out. We could hear
the sirens coming. An army of cops were hiding right up the street, fully
knowing
that something, sooner or later, would happen.

Cruisers and paddy wagons come flying onto the property, along with an
ambulance for Vap. The party, understandably, breaks up. I run to the
ambulance,
because I'm a businessman and I am thinking about getting paid. The band
thinks
(knows) I'm mental. Vap is being shot in on a gurney. He catches my eye and
starts
laughing. What, did you think I was going to die and you guys would get
stuffed.
He laughed and laughed. See my old man back at the house. You guys were
great!

The Recording Session

The Homewreckers went into the studio to cut our first four-song, 45RPM EP. We cut a bunch of tracks, when I noticed it was 10:45 and the packies (liquor stores) closed at 11:00. It was time for a B double E double R UN. Magic Sam and Lewis went in to get the beer. The Wolf and I were waiting in the station wagon. A girl walks by with a huge armful of flowers. The Wolf said, out the window, as she passed, you have our deepest sympathies (in a Curly of the Stooges voice, complete with nyuk, nyuk, nyuk). She says, "My brother was buried today and you're way out of line". She leaves. We laugh and wait. Wolf says "Check this out". There's a huge crowd of kids running this way. He pulls a spotlight out of his glove box and starts flashing it all over the place. I have absolutely no idea what's going on, I'm just waiting for the beer. He says "They'll think we're the cops". Still, I'm clueless. The windows start to break and Wolf blasts out of the parking spot. He keeps circling the parking lot. We're being chased by this crowd and several vehicles. The station wagon is peppered with bricks and stones. All the windows are busted. I say to Wolf, "How come you keep circling around and around?" We had hit at least a dozen cars and most of the light standards. He says, "We got to pick up Sam, Lewis and the beer." He was totally serious. I said, "Get the fuck out of here now." He blasts right over one of those concrete berms and onto the street. The cars chasing us stopped at the berms. We were out of there. A hundred miles an hour, back to the studio.

Now, Sam and Lewis were in the liquor store, when the attendant grabs the phone and calls the cops. He's shouting in the phone, "Get here right away, there's a huge riot going on in the parking lot". Sam and Lewis look outside and see us in the middle of all this shit. From what I was told, Sam says to Lewis, "How we going to get back, now?" That's almost as funny as the Wolf driving back and forth through the gauntlet. Got together to start laying down a few vocal tracks, but I shook and my knees knocked for a solid hour. We agreed. Let's wrap this shit up tomorrow.

And Now The Rest Of The Story (Thank's Paul Harvey)

Wolf and I drive back to Lawrence and stop at The Horseshoe Bar on Park St. One of the toughest clubs in town. We were doing this dare thing, we always did when we were crazy. The recording session was on our minds and we couldn't stop laughing. So, at the bar, I throw my beer all over the bar tender's glass and say,

"Run!" We get chased out of the club and down Park St. to the station wagon. We blast away and we still can't stop laughing. So, the Wolf says, "Watch this!"

He flies down the alley, running behind Broadway. Sixty miles an hour, down this narrow alley. We come up to the back of a chinese restaurant and there was

a pile of garbage the size of a house. Wolf says, "Top this." He hits that pile dead

center and there's an explosion of garbage. We laugh all the way home. He drops

me off. The next morning the phone is ringing. I can hear Donna saying,

"They did

what?" It seems the Wolf's wife Sharon had to take the battered beast to work. The

brakes were soft. She stops at the corner gas station and the guy puts it up on the

lift. He comes and gets her and says, "Lady, you got to see this." The wheel wells

were full of chinese food. Wolf and I couldn't hang out together for a long time.

The Worthen Hotel

I played at Speakeasy Pete's Downtown Lounge, in Lowell, for years. It was a biker

bar and where there are bikers, there are hookers. In the words of Paul Simon,

singing about the whores on 7th Avenue, where he sings, "There were sometimes

I took some comfort there." Well, I'm no angel. The Hells Angels were into creative

marketing. A hundred bucks gets you a gram of coke and a blow-job. The women

weren't the prettiest and didn't have lots of teeth, but when nature calls. One night,

I talk to Pete. "You're like sixty years old and over the past five years, I watch you

sit at the end of the bar, with a beautiful young woman at your side, everytime

I have come in here. What is it you have?" He says, "Money! You want to meet a

nice girl, like this? All you have to do is talk to the woman sitting next to you."

She looked like Raquel Welch. A good thirty years older than me. She tells

me she
knows a million beautiful women and would be glad to introduce me to some
one.
She hands me a business card and says, "Come with me". We go into the
ladies
room and when the women there see her, they bail. She must have clout.
She
powders my nose and invites me back to her place. Peter never told me what
was
up. The guys a riot. It's a young man's dream come true. I couldn't pass up
the
invite. But, was I surprised. Her place was full of businessmen, each with a
georgous woman at his side. I'm so naive. There's a huge buffet and bar.
Everybody is having a ball. She disappears and comes back with three
women.
Pamela Anderson, Charlez Theron and Sandra Bernhard (well, they couldn't
all
be knock-outs). She asks, "Do you see anything you like?" I say, without
hesitation,
"Yeah, you." I made a friend for life, by just being honest. She had a great
system,
where you could put it on your credit card and the statement would look like
you
just went in for an oil change, every week. I had to quit going, because the
women
started to look my Mother and Sister. No longer these strange little
playthings, who
were something other than human.

Mickey Ward

My favorite prize fighter was Mickey Ward, from Lowell, MA. We would go and
see
Mickey win the state Golden Gloves Championship in Brockton. He went pro
and
all the guys followed every decision. He even beat Marvalous Marvin Hagler,
by
decision, in Hagler's home town of Brockton. Well, this brings me back to
myself.
Watching the Friday night fights, with my Dad. Look sharp, feel sharp, be
sharp,
with Gillette Blue Blades. I can count on one hand, the number of times I had
to
punch some guy in the mouth. The last time, was two weeks ago.

I go to a jam, Monday nights, at The Frog And Peach, right around the corner

from my apartment. That Monday, instead of the jam, they are showcasing some band from Washington state. I talk to the front man and he says, "We have our show. If you want to come up and do one after we are done, it's OK. Well, their guitar player was a Hendrix clone. A real nice guy. We talked outside and I told him my Hendrix stories. They played the most boring shit you could ever imagine. The guitar player says, "They don't do blues." I tell him, it will be more like rock. They call me up after the set, "Little Jimmy from South Boston." The regulars howl. I do an old up tempo Blues song and get the place doing call and response shouting. The dance floor is packed for the first time all night.

I put my harp in my pocket and start home. This dude, the bass player grabs me outside. He starts shouting that I sabotaged (clattered with savots) their showcase. I laugh and say, "That's what I do." I turn to leave and he spins the old man around. I knocked him out with a straight right, right on the button. I bail across the street, into The Library, my favorite dive. The barmaid hides my leather coat and sweater, so I'm sitting at the bar in different clothes than I was wearing across the street. The cops come in and are looking for an old guy in a black leather jacket. Not here, man. I was high for a couple of days. The old man still has it.

Mickey Ward Update

Mickey was up and coming. Beating guys who were ranked a lifetime ahead of him. Nobody, in the middle-weight division wanted to fight him. He was a career destroyer. The cops in Lowell, hated Mickey. A famous barroom brawler. Always fucking with the cops. They pull him over for something or other, get him on the ground and beat the fuck out of his hands with their billy clubs. He never fought again. I hear they are making a movie about his life, tentatively called "The Fighter."

Mania

This time of year, when the surf is up and Bikini is a State of mind, I get manic. Not, like all the time, but in spurts. I got a bug about writing and started to write stories. Been a long time? Check your calendar, if you were stupid enough to save my shit. Almost a year to the day, that I pounded out the last bunch. Check the dates. Every day, every hour I was pounding them out. Hello. I'm fine, but just when I found out I was loosing the Psychiatrist, that saved my life, the seasonal stuff started.. We worked together like two old hippies, which we both were. My sessions with Dr. Guzman (a jazz drummer), went like this. "Smoke some pot, Brother and kick the booze for good. Make a plan. Monitor every second. If you feel you don't need a fucking pill, don't take it. If you need half, take half. Don't listen to a few fools, when your life is at stake, Brother. Take fucking control of your meds and the booze, don't even listen to an old Brother, like me. It's all up to you. I can't save you from yourself.

So, I'm having problems, have to wait to meet the new Psychiatrist and the next time I'm in an emergency room, I better not have a fucking pulse. All the old people were asking about me, in my apartment building. Has Tim disappeared, we never see him anymore? Agoraphobia and I work in the marketplace. Get it? Not safe, until I click that door behind me, when I get home. Hey, it's seasonal, like every seven years, the gypsy moths invade New England. My new Psychiatrist is sixteen, but our first meeting was productive. He said, you and Eduardo were doing everything right. Put the control in your own hands, but when Ed said, take half, take one, take three, he failed to mention, you can take six. Man, everything has changed in the last couple of weeks. It takes a long time for psychotropics to kick

in. I'll miss the mania. I got a lot done.

Pot

California, today, is liked I dreamed it would be in 1967. More marijuana dispenseries, in town, than Starbucks. What does that tell you? An idiot, could go to see Dr. Dope, downtown. Doctor, my ass-hole is killing me. The Dr. says, yeah. The idiot pulls out a couple of emergency room papers. OK. You've got chronic ass-hole pain. Let's talk about a treatment program. The guy says, I smoked a joint yesterday and my ass-hole was smiling. The Dr. signs him up. A medical marijuana card. I fell into paradise!

Alex's Big Win

I was a boy scout and one of the best things we ever did was build and race Pine Box Derby race cars. My entries were always hideous and never did well. So, when I got a second chance to help build one with Alex, I was out to win. I enlisted the engineering staff at Lindt & Sprungli. They had all built the race cars when they were kids and several had made winning cars for their sons. We came up with the ultimate racer. The weight in the racer to achieve the maximum gross weight was added right in the tail end, so the mass fell further from the top of the race track to the bottom. The little nails, that hold the wheels on, as well as the inside hub of the wheels, themselves, were coated with teflon to eliminate drag. Any moving part that touched another was coated in teflon. The gross weight was checked on a lab scale and was exact to three decimal points. The best trick was inserting a small magnet in the nose. The little rods that held the cars back at the top of the track were made of metal, so when the rod flipped forward to release the racer, it would give the racer a little quicker start. We stole this idea

from a family that kept winning the national Soap Box Derby. The officials found a huge magnet in the front of their racers, giving them an unfair edge. Everything worked as planned. It was a win, that I had waited for, for years.

Von's

told you, I got paranoid, this time of year. I took my first sick-day, in the seventh months, that I've been employed. I worried about being questioned, about what my ailment was. I was thinking, they would be saying, he took a sick day, because he played last night and was probably too hung-over, to come to work. I saw the Managers talking and then, both looking over at me. I was right. When I called in sick, the Manager said, Oh, there's something I had for you to do today. Red flag. He never talks to me and would never have something for me special to do. I'm going to be drug tested. Tell them I'm sick and they think (the doctors), it is the Whooping Cough, that is in this area. I was sick. A bad cold, that I couldn't shake. Everybody knew it.

Still, I'm paranoid. So, I go to work and I'm seeing a pattern. Four of the would-be managers, all said the same thing to me, almost, word-for-word. Tim, where are you going? What are you doing, now? Help me over here. Yeah, I'm paranoid. One guy saying it and I would be saying, This guy has a hair across his ass, tonight. Two and I would say, It's a coincidence. But four! A conspiracy. Never been done, in the last seven months. Then, I get paged by the Management type checkers, to come and bag at register whatever. Three times! A coincidence? Never happened in the last seven months. Sure, I've slowed down, in the last seven months. The first few months, I worked, like a raped ape. I've learned to pace myself. Especially, now. I managed an entire plant, for Lindt & Sprungli. I had three

hundred employees working for me. If I ever heard that my managers were harrassing or singling out a mental senior citizen, I would have fired them all on the spot. If they weren't at work, I would have called them personally and fired them then, too.

The Draft Board

I was almost drafted during the Viet-Nam war. I have always been a patriot, but there were a lot of questions about the reasoning behind the whole thing. I had the lowest grade-point average (the lowest they would even bother printing, on a report card, or whatever they called them), so I was scooped up to serve. The night before I had to go in for the evaluation, I sat with the family at Fair Oaks Avenue. I said, "I'm not really concerned about the outcome, because I'm not serving." If I had to go to jail, it was already accepted.

The bus ride, to the Army base in South Boston, with all of us Merrimac Valley boys, was quiet. We took an aptitude test. I think I did real good. Then, they sent you to a dozen stations, where they would check everything. The first place I went, was to check your hearing. A soldier put me in a box. "Put on these headphones and when you hear the tone push this button". So, I sit down and press the button. The soldier, opens the door and says, "You're supposed to press the button, when you hear the tone, Sir". He closes the door, I press the button. This went on for a while. The next place checked your eyes. "Look in the viewfinder and read me line six". I read line one. The soldier says, "Read line six!" I say, "I can see line one. Let me just read line one". This went on for a while. When I left, the soldier says, "Be careful not to trip over the chairs, on your way out. Finally, I went to the shrinks. My game now. In five minutes, I had the shrink screaming at me so much, that he had to leave the cubicle. Another shrink comes in. It only takes about three minutes to put this guy away.

The last station was where all the rejects were sent. I knew some guys from Haverhill and we laughed. They brought you into the final cube. "How would you like to work for the government?" We can't send you to be killed, but we can send you to pick up garbage on the White House lawn. I passed on that. Went back to Lawrence and watched the strippers at The Chez When. The funniest thing from the whole day was a conversation I overheard at the evaluation. "These guys from Lawrence are always trouble".

Alcohol

I've had a love affair for booze, ever since I can remember. It was in my genetic make-up., I was a late bloomer, not really drinking until the age 21. In high school, I drank because of peer pressure, but only once in a blue moon when we could get an older brother to buy us a jug, and I hated the way it made me feel., When I started driving a truck for a living, all the guys would hit the bars after work. From one bar to another, in Lawrence, and I have to admit it was fun. We were regulars, whose usual drinks were set up as you walked in. We were barroom heroes! A tough bunch of guys, who wouldn't take shit from anybody. The Falk & White crew, always together, whether it be during work, or on vacation. We were always together. Header, Hank Solach, Frugal Fred, Magee, Rico. I have to admit, these were some of the happiest days of my life

But alcohol got in the way of my relationship with my family. My kids may not think so, but there were many times I opted for the barroom, as apposed to being there for a ballgame or whatever. This will haunt me until the day I die.

Today, it's a day to day struggle. Somedays, I wake up and know today I'll be drinking. I know it from the second I wake up. I can go go for days drinking like an average Joe, maybe a beer or two after work, if that. But, on the devil inspired days, I can drink from morning to night, an obscene amount of booze. More than a normal person could ever endure, but that's because I have such an affinity for alcohol. I can remember going into the hospital once, and they said we are not surprised that you were able to walk in here on your own, but that you

were
even alive! It's a curse!

Hey Lance

Been a long time, brother! Hope all is well with you. Moved to California.
Doing
my Little Jimmy thing here on the Central Coast. Would love to know what
your
up to. I'm back to robbing liquor stores and spending the money on Pez and
porno,
the rest I'm wasting. Put on your collage/music DVD when I bring chicks to
the crib,
they always say it's groovy!
Keep in touch.